

INTERNAL USE ONLY

JOURNAL

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL

Tuesday - 30 December 1969

1. (Internal Use Only - JMM) Representative John O. Marsh called to say that he was leaving on Friday, 2 January 1970 for a visit to Vietnam, where he would look into several matters in behalf of House Appropriations Committee Chairman Mahon. Marsh said if his schedule permitted he might like to come to the Agency tomorrow for a short briefing by Mr. Carver. He will let us know whether he can work this in.

2. (Unclassified - JMD) Angela Morris, of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff, called and requested on behalf of the Symington Subcommittee the "Official Use Only" books covering USSR, Red China, North Vietnam and Laos for December. I told her I would pass this request to FBIS.

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JOHN M. MAURY
Legislative Counsel

cc:
ER .
O/DDCI

Mr. Houston

OPFB
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U.S. LAOS REPORT IS KEPT SECRET

White House Held Blocking Release Of Testimony

By NATHAN MILLER

(Washington Bureau of The Sun)

Washington, Dec. 4—The White House is blocking publication of a transcript of secret hearings held by a Senate foreign-relations subcommittee on the controversial American commitment in Laos, informed sources said today.

"The hearings were held in October and here we are in December and the transcript hasn't been cleared yet," commented one source. "There has been no agreement on what, if anything, is to be published."

At the time of the hearings held by the subcommittee, headed by Senator Stuart Symington (D., Mo.), Senator J. William Fulbright (D., Ark.), the chairman of the parent committee, had charged the United States is spending \$150 million annually to support a clandestine army of 36,000 men in Laos.

Authorization Claimed

He called the involvement "most unusual and irregular, if not unconstitutional," but William P. Rogers, Secretary of State, maintained the government had not acted without the authority or knowledge of Congress in becoming involved in the "twilight" war in the tiny southeast Asian country.

It was the second time in as many months in which the executive branch has tried to hold up or censor transcripts of hearings by Senator Symington's subcommittee, which is conducting an inquiry into American commitments abroad.

The State Department succeeded in getting publication of the transcript of the hearings on the Philippines held up until after presidential elections in that country and deletion of much testimony regarding corruption involving American bases in the islands.

Laid To White House

"It is suspected that the White House is delaying clearance of the report on Laos," one source reported.

When it was finally published in a "sanitized" version on November 18, the Philippines report stated that the United

States has paid \$39 million in direct costs and untold further millions in other costs, to keep a 1,500-man Philippine engineering brigade in South Vietnam.

It has also been reported that the Symington subcommittee has determined that it has cost \$1 billion to obtain deployment of a Thai division in Vietnam, although the State Department has denied the charge.

Thailand Expenses

Authoritative sources have conceded that overall U.S. spending in Thailand, including the construction of seven air bases, roads and a deep-water military port could total \$1 billion in costs or perhaps more. The facilities are used by U.S. forces in support of the Vietnam War.

The information released in the report on the Philippines resulted in a furor in Manila, and the White House is apparently bent on preventing the Laos transcript from creating problems in its relations there.

After an appearance before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on October 29, Mr. Rogers said, "I do not believe there is going to be any change in policy, not now," when questioned about Senator Fulbright's charges.

Expresses Regret

He went on to charge that the conduct of such operations without the knowledge of Congress was permissible only in "a dictatorship."

Meanwhile, Mr. Fulbright, who is giving a series of Senate speeches discussing the Pentagon's \$27.9 million public relations operation, said it was not until he saw an Air Force film that he realized "our military forces in Thailand were engaged in what would appear to be a Vietnam-style pacification program."

Criticizes 2d Film

The film in question, made in 1968, purports to show "civic-action programs in Thailand's rural areas by the Air Forces 606th Air Commando Squadron."

The Senator was also critical of another Air Force film on the "largest airborne training exercise in Europe" conducted in Spain last year.